

Malfuzat: An Analysis of the criticism on Anees ul Arwah

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Abstract

This article represents the Malfuzat and its importance, especially deals with Anees ul Arwah the Malfuzat of Khwaja Usman e Harvani, compiled by his towering successor Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. It also throws light on the criticism of Anees ul Arwah by Late Prof. Habib in his article “Chishti Mystics records of the sultanate period”

Malfuzat is generally defined as discourses, conversations and sermons delivered by Sufi in the assemblies of the learned persons and recorded by their disciples. Malfuzat-writing is one of the important branch of Sufi literature as it contains the teachings of the leading Sufi masters of their time delivered in gatherings of their disciples and visitors. It contains the explanations of verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad, the anecdotes and sayings of early Sufis.

The word “Malfuzat” is the plural of “Malfuz” which is derived from the word “Lafz” (word). In his book, ‘Ain-e-Malfuzat’, Allama Akhlaq Hussain Dehalvi beautifully defines it as “a collection of those conversations which the Sufis made in the gatherings of their disciples and devotees for the persuasion of extremely praiseworthy morals and pious deeds. It concerns the perception of the audience and the cure of the diseases of their heart and spiritual enhancement. It even carries the remembrance of the highly revered

Sufis which redoubles its effectiveness". Malfuzat is also known as the indications (Isharat), sayings (Aqwal), and morals (Fawaid).¹

Shaikh Fariduddin Attar remarks in his book 'Tazkirat ul Aulia'² that, after the Holy Quran and Hadith he found the best thing is the sayings of the Sufis and he found all the saying of Sufis according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah. So he indulges himself in it if he cannot imitate to them. At the minimum, he shall receive the honour to resemble them. Even Amir Hasan ala Sijzi says that "he heard from the Shaykh many times that the novice (Mureed) must consult a book of Sufi masters and their guidelines for spiritual progress".³ This quote substantially conveys that to the enrichment of the progressive Sufi journey it is essential to consult the books of the great Sufis.

Malfuzat also fill up the gaps of medieval history because most of the Indian historians were obsessed with the Iranian concept of historiography. This is so because the historical accounts that were recorded in this period are useful only in getting details of the events which were taking place in the royal courts, battles, and campaigns. They completely ignored the portrayal of the social life of the populace and their problems. However, to some extent, the Malfuzat relieve the difficulty of these historical events.

In his 'on sources and source material', Prof K.A. Nizami observes that the Malfuz writing is one of the greatest literary achievement of medieval Hind-o-Pak. Through these records of conversations we get a glimpse of the medieval society in all its fullness; if not, in all of its perfection- the moods and tension of the common men, the inner

¹ Aina e Malfuzat pg.no.28

² Tazkirat ul Auliya pg.no.3.Also refer Iqtibas ul Anwar pg.no..46

³ Fawaid ul fuwad chapter 1 majlis 28.

yearnings of their souls, the religious thoughts at its higher and lower levels, the popular customs, above all, it encompasses all the problems of the people”⁴

Malfuzat also shed light on the building of exoteric (Zahir) and escortic (Batin) process of the disciples. This is *the modus operandi* of the Sufis; they initiate the process according to the level of the intellect of their disciples and reform the society into a better one. Sufism in India was initiated by Chishti order in an organised manner so the credit of Malfuz writing goes to Chishti saints in the Indian context

It has been asserted by the modern scholars that the Malfuzat should be arranged chronologically:

These scholars make ‘Fawaid ul Fuwad’ of Amir Hasan Ala Sijzi as the model of Malfuzat writing, as its compiler used a different style of writing in his work. However, there were other disciples who collected the Malfuzat of Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia was Shaykh Qiwanuddin entitled ‘Qiwān ul Aqaid’. Another Malfuzat collection is ‘Durar- I – Nizami’, compiled by Maulana Ali bin Mahmud Jandar, both the compilers didn’t use dates before writing the conversation.

In fact, we can say that Amir Hasan ala Sijzi who gave the new literary style of Malfuzat writing, but this is not the conventional pattern of Malfuzat writing. If we look at the Malfuzat of predecessors like, for instance, the Malfuzat of Sufi Hamiduddin Nagori, entitled as ‘Surur us Sudur’ collected by his grandson Shaykh Sayeed, the son of Shaykh Fariduddin Chak Parra, he didn’t mention the dates of conversation, before writing the conversation.

Regarding the authenticity of Malfuzat, it is not necessary to mention dates or arrange them chronologically. Take the example of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet, noted by some of his Companions (Sabahah) to preserve it. Later the Hadith collectors like

⁴ On sources and source material pg.no.69

Imam Bukhari and Iman Muslim didn't include dates or chronological pattern while chalking out the rules for Hadith collection. The compiler arranged the Hadith thematically and not chronologically. In the same manner, while compiling the Malfuzat of the Sufis, it is not necessary that it should be chronologically arranged. In general, mostly the Malfuzat is arranged in a thematic way.

'Anees ul Arwah' is the collection of the conversation of Khwaja Usman e Harvani compiled by his eminent disciple Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. It contains 28 Majalis (assemblies) on different topics, mostly on morality (Akhlaqiyat).

Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti became a devoted disciple of the Shaykh after completing his education from Bukhara and Samarqand. He went to Baghdad and took the Bai'ah (oath of allegiance) at the hand of the Shaykh and remained in his company for a period of 20 years. In this space of time, he compiled the conversation, utterances, and discourses of his spiritual master under the name of 'Anees ul Arwah'. Its literal meaning is 'Anees' means companion or friend and 'Arwah' mean souls which is a plural of 'Ruh'

In the beginning of the book Khwaja, Moinuddin Chishti wrote an introduction to a sermon (Khutba), then his spiritual experience and travels. The pattern of the book is that every Majlis (Assembly) begins with a theme and ended with the following lines "Khwaja finished his discourse, he got busy invoking Allah and this well-wisher (Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti) returned to his place".

Some modern scholars and historians, particularly Late Prof Md Habib, professor of History at Aligarh Muslim University; raised objections on some Malfuzat in his article, "Chishti Mystics records of the Sultanate period", he was the first person who raised the question in the Malfuzat literature. In his article, he categorised the text of the Sufi literature into two categories, the one as genuine text and the other as a fabricated one. He examined and classified 'Anees ul Arwah' as fabricated and apocryphal based on the following points:

Firstly, he quoted the text of 'Khair ul Majalis', Majlis no 11

(Point 1) "A friend represented after this: "there is a difficulty in the malfuz (conversation) of Khwaja Usman -I haruni. It is this. He says, 'he who kills two cows, commits one murder, and he who kills four cows, commits two murders (khun). He who kills four goats commits one murder and he who kills twenty goats, commits two murders".

In 'Anees ul Arwah', Majlis no 11 the narration for killing animals is like this

"Anyone who injured 40 cows, one major sin would be recorded in his deeds and one who killed an animal, for his carnal desires would be a person who helped in ruining the Khana-e- Kabah; it was fair only where situation permitted".

This is the narration of Khwaja Usman e Harvani; but the person who was asking and inquiring for this statement he says, "He who kills two cows" while in 'Anees ul Arwah' it has been recorded as injuring 40 cows. So, on the basis of statement of Khwaja Usman e Harvani in 'Anees ul Arwah', it proved that the inquiry of that person was incorrect, i.e Khwaja Naseeruddin Chiragh Dehalvi confirmed like this "these Malfuz are not his. I have come across the manuscript." It also proved that Khwaja Naseeruddin Chiragh Dehalvi have the manuscript or a copy of 'Anees ul Arwah' as well. On the basis of that manuscript or his reading, he said the statement is wrong, which was narrated by the person in the assembly as mentioned is in 'Khair ul Majalis'.

(Point 2) Prof. Habib quoted that it is stated in 'Fawaaid ul Fuwad' that someone came to Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya and said that he had heard a man declaring that he had seen a book written by the great Shaikh and that the Shaikh replied " I have written no book and my masters (also) have written no book".

This statement given in 'Khair ul Majalis' is also considered to be misleading because Sufi Hamiduddin Nagori the author of 'Mirat ul Asrar'⁵ has mentioned the names of the books of him, viz Usool ut Tariqat,⁶ Risala e Ishqia etc. Further, it should be understood that writing a book and compiling Malfuzat are two different things.

(Point 3) Prof. Habib quoted "I asked again. These manuscripts that appeared in these days - the Malfuzat of Shaikh Qutubuddin and the Malfuzat of Shaikh Usman Haruni- did they exist at the time of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya?

3.1-Regarding the manuscript of the Malfuzat of Khwaja Usman e Harvani it seems that Khwaja Naseeruddin Chiragh Dehalvi (disciples and successor of Nizamuddin Auliya) have a copy of the manuscript of 'Anees ul Arwah'. The reason is simple because on the basis of his reading he confirmed that "these Malfuzat are not his"

3.2-Even Shaykh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri had referred to Anees ul Arwah because one disciple of Yahya Maneri asked about for the inquiry of the narration of Khwaja Usman e Harvani.in his assembly which is discussed in 'Khwan-i-Pur Nimat'.⁷

⁵ Mirat ul Asrar pg.no.678

⁶ See 'Manaqib ul Arifeen' vol 2 pg.no. 269 author remarks "his book Usool ut Tariqat is a comprehensive book in which he discussed all the issues of tariqat, as well as its status, is the guide to the secret aspect of Sufism". The author of 'Akhbar ul Akhyar' pg.no.52 also quoted that Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya selected the Malfuzat from his books and wrote it. This quote conveys that Sufi Hamiduddin Nagori wrote books. More over Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya have go through the books and acquire the Malfuzat for compiling and writing it.

Another book of Sufi Hamiduddin Nagori is 'Khayalat-i-Ushshaq' preserved in Pir Mohammed Shah library serial no.1374&1375

⁷ Khwan-i-Pur Nimat pg no.125-126, 37th Assembly

Both the above points (3.1) and (3.2) demonstrated that the manuscript was present at the time of Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia because both Sufis were the contemporaries of him.

Many Hagiological accounts contain the quotation of 'Anees ul Arwah' they are as follows:-

- a. The author of 'Mirat ul Asrar' referred 'Anees ul Arwah'⁸ in many places he quoted the text of 'Anees ul Arwah'. In one place he quoted the third assembly of the 'Anees ul Arwah'⁹.
- b. The author of 'Akhbar ul Jamal' referred and quoted the text of Anees ul Arwah in the chapter of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti for compiling his accounts.¹⁰

(Point 4) Prof. Habib observes that the narration of Khwaja Naseeruddin and argues that

4.1- "it is a fake, fabrication, a forgery, no such books was ever written"

I discussed above about this statement refer point 3 of this article.

4.2- its teachings are not those this Silsilah and many things are attributed to Shaikh Usman Harvani which, as a Chishti Sufi, he would not have said. It represents, in other words, mysticism of a lower grade.

To this point, it is proved that the narration of the Malfuz of Shaikh Usman which was inquired from Khwaja Naseeruddin was a false statement, i.e. Khwaja Naseeruddin only gave confirmation on the false statement and rejected it. It doesn't imply that the Malfuzat of Khwaja Usman e Harvani was not present. Prof Mohd Habib makes this

⁸ Mirat ul Asrar pg. no 554,592,594

⁹ Ibid pg no 556

¹⁰ Akhbar ul Jamal pg no 181

narration as the base of the fabrication of 'Anees ul Arwah' and other Malfuzat of other Chishti saints. It has been proved that the narration is wrong as well as Prof. Habib's consideration of the 'Anees ul Arwah' as fabricated, and he further asserts that the teachings of Khwaja Usman Harvani was not in accordance with the teachings of the Chishti order.

(Point 5) Prof. Habib quoted "Shaikh Moinuddin is made to describe his enrollment as a disciple" the passage deals with how Khwaja Usman e Harvani made Khwaja Moinuddin as a Kamil Sufi and further Prof Habib quoted that "well might Shaikh Naseeruddin protest against this sort of wild talk about "the sight of divine throne and the curtain of the highest"

Through the whole passage of 'Khair ul Majalis', Khwaja Naseeruddin did not say that the sight of the divine throne and the curtain of highest is wild talk. For this type of narration, we can quote the narrations from 'Ser ul Auliya' which Prof Habib considered as authentic in his own way.

5.1- When Khwaja Mawdud Chishti granted the Vilayat(supernatural domain) of Nishapur to Shaykh Usman, this sight got changed. It is a narration of his household that whenever Khwaja Mawdud Chishti had an overpowering fondness of viewing Khana e Kabah, the angels were ordered to bring the Khana e Kabah before him. He would make circumambulation and would offer Namaz in consonance with its position and then they used to take away the Khana e Kabah.

5.2- I (Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti) circumambulated Khana e Kabah for a certain period, but now the Khana e Kabah circumambulates me.

5.3- it is narrated from a dear one." I departed for viewing the Shaykh from my town. I passed through the town of Bundi; it emerged in my heart that there was a mendicant here who is called Shaykh Mohan; why should I not meet him. I went to him. He said. "Where are you going?" I replied, "in the presence of the Sultan ul Mashaikh,

convey my Salaam to him and say that there would be meeting in the Khana e Kabah on Friday. When I reached to the abode of Sultan- ul- Mashaikh. I conveyed the greetings of the mendicant who was in the town of Bundi; he replied, that the dervish is dear to me but he has no control over his tongue”

(Point 6) Prof. Habib quoted that “finally we reached the Kabah. Shaikh Usman took my hand and assigned me to god and prayed for me under the aqueduct (Nawdan) of the sacred building. “We have accepted Moinuddin Hasan Sijzi”, a heavenly voice replied. From Makkah, we proceeded to Madina. At the grave of the prophet, Shaikh Usman said to me ‘offer your Salaam, I obeyed. ‘Salaam to thee, oh Qutub (axis) of the sheikh! A voice from the grave replied ‘go thou hast attained perfection’

In the above passage, Prof. Habib quoted that “Amir Khurd reported on good authority that none of the Chishti Shaikhs performed the Hajj pilgrimage. Shaikh Moinuddin’s pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina is a creation of the anonymous writer’s imagination”

If we read carefully the narration of ‘Ser ul Auliya’ which Prof. Habib has quoted proves that he misquoted the narration for the passage of ‘Anees ul Arwah’. There is a difference between Hajj and simple visitation (Ziyarat/Umrah) and Hajj is performed in a specific month and time, i.e. on 9th Zil Qadah in the premises of Arafat. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti went for a simple visit with his spiritual master in Kabah (Kabah is a specific place in Mecca. For Hajj, it is necessary to be present within the boundaries of the premises of Arafat on 9th Zil Qadah). Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti said “we reached Kabah and from there we proceeded to Medina” if Khwaja Moinuddin went for Hajj, he would say like this, “we reached Mecca for Hajj...” The narration simply conveys that it was not the time of Hajj when he visited Mecca.

The author of 'Ser ul Aqtab'¹¹ also reported that Khwaja Moinuddin went for a simple visit (Ziyarat/Umrah) .

This simply determined that Prof. Habib misquoted and misinterpreted the narration of 'Ser ul Auliya' by putting down the argument for 'Anees ul Arwah' as fabricated. He himself did not read carefully this narration of 'Anees ul Arwah' and therefore could not differentiate it, whether it was for Hajj or a simple visit (Ziyarat/Umrah)

(Point 7) Prof. Habib quoted "Shaikh Usman refer to Ahmad Mashuq, a mystic who according to Nizamuddin Auliya flourished in the succeeding century"

In 'Anees ul Arwah' and 'Ser ul Auliya' we find the narration on Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq, didn't offer Namaz. In 'Ser Auliya' after addressing Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq thereafter, Sultan ul Mashaikh said 'I heard from one person that Khwaja Ahmed Ghazali' "All truthful will have a longing lest they were the soil so that Khwaja Mashuq would have trodden upon them."

Prof. Habib considered that Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq according to Nizamuddin Auliya happened to be in the succeeding century is fallacious because in the text of 'Ser ul Auliya' it is written like this "I heard from one person that Khwaja Ahmed Ghazali"¹². In 'Nafhat ul Uns' the author has also penned down the reflections of the life of Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq. The author also mentioned with the authority of Ain ul Quddat Hamadan's epistle¹³ that he didn't offer Namaz. The author of 'Lataif I Ashrafi'¹⁴ also

¹¹ Ser ul Aqtab pg no. 138

¹² Ser ul Auliya pg.no. 621

¹³ Nafhat ul Uns pg. no. 543

¹⁴ Lataif I Ashrafi pg.no.62

quoted the same narration with the authority of the epistle's of Ain ul Quddat. Also Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya quoted Ain ul Quddat Hamadani¹⁵ in 'Ser ul Auliya'.¹⁶

Ahmed Ghazali, who was the younger brother of Hujjat ul Islam (proof of Islam) Imam Muhammad Ghazali, Ain ul Quddat Hamadani was the disciple of Ahmed Ghazali and both these Sufis referred Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq it implies that he was the contemporary of both of them because these saints quoted and referred him.¹⁷

Prof. Habib quoted Shaikh Ahmed Mashuq flourished in the succeeding century according to Nizamuddin Auliya proved the wrong Shaykh Ahmed Mashuq was the predecessor of Khwaja Usman e Harvani i.e he quoted in 'Anees ul Arwah' and Ahmed Ghazali died before Khwaja Usman e Harvani was born and Ain ul Quddat Hamadani was the disciple of Ahmed Ghazali and Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya narrated like this "I heard from one person that Ahmed Ghazali" it means he heard the narration of Ahmed Mashuq from one person with the authority of Ahmed Ghazali and Ahmed Ghazali died before Khwaja Usman e Harvani was born and Khwaja Usman e Harvani quoted it in 'Anees ul Arwah'

(Point 9) As Prof. Habib says "Shaikh Usman quoted from 'Mashariq ul Anwar' which was written at least a generation after his death"

Firstly- Prof. Habib considered that only one 'Mashariq ul Anwar' which was penned down by Maulana Raziuddin Hasan Saghani. At that time, the author of 'Mashariq ul Anwar' Raziuddin Hasan Saghani was not born at that time when Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was with his spiritual master.

¹⁵ Khwaja Banda Nawaz also wrote an explanatory notes on the book of him entitled as 'Sharah Tamhidat, Zubdat ul Haqiq'

¹⁶ Ser ul Auliya pg.no.636

¹⁷ See Fawa'id ul Fuwad chapter II majlis no 33

Secondly - As Prof. Habib considered that the Hadith which is in 'Anees ul Arwah' was from Sagani's 'Mashariq ul Anwar', if we look into this book we do not find this Hadith in Sagani's book. This conveys that the Hadith which is in 'Anees ul Arwah' is from different 'Mashariq ul Anwar' but for calling Anees ul Arwah as fabricated Habib's puts allegations which he himself does not know; he merely quoted it but he did not analysed his arguments.

Thirdly- The Author started his career as a traditionalist in 610A.H / 1213A.D and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti reached Ajmer in 1192 A.D. Since the author of 'Mashariq ul Anwar' began his career as traditionalist in 1213A.D this proved that the 'Mashariq ul Anwar' which Khwaja Usman e Harvani quoted was not the 'Mashariq ul Anwar' of Raziuddin Hasan Saghani.

In short, after thoroughly assessing Malfuzat and 'Anees ul Arwah', and deeply going through the criticism of Prof Habib on 'Anees ul Arwah' I found that all the grounds of Prof Habib are false. He simply raised the objections about its authenticity without having detailed knowledge of life, character and teachings of Khwaja Usman e Harvani and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. He even didn't know what Sufism is; simply he writes for 'Anees ul Arwah' calling it fabricated. He also touched those aspects which a common man did not understand with his intellect (Aql) he considered 'wild talks' it conveys that he don't know about the secret aspects of Tasawwuf.

As Allama Iqbal says in 'Bal-i- Jibril'

Khird Ke Paas Khabar Ke Siwa Kuch Aur Nahin

(The mind can give you nought, but what with doubt is fraught)

Tera Ilaj Nazar Ke Siwa Kuch Aur Nahin

(One look at Saintly Guide can needful cure provide)

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